



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2022
8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Virtually Conducted

Members present: Marc Breslow, Shelly Dein, Pasi Miettinen, Jim DiTullio, David Morgan, Talia Fox, Ryan Katofsky, Dan Amstutz

Also attending: Pat Hanlon, Eugene Benson, Claire Ricker

Members not present: Eric Helmuth, Jim Feeney (for Sandy Pooler)

Ms. Fox convened the meeting at 8:15 am and read a brief statement noting the Massachusetts legislature extended the legislation that permits virtual meetings through March 2023.

1. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the September 23, 2022 meeting. Ms. Fox asked for any corrections, additions, or changes to the draft minutes. There were no changes to the minutes. Ms. Dein motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Mr. Breslow seconded. The Committee then approved the September 23rd meeting minutes.

2. Claire Ricker Introduction

Ms. Ricker is the new Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). Ms. Ricker introduced herself. She has worked as Director of Real Estate for a community development corporation in Lowell. The organization worked on a passive house multi-family building in Lowell. Ms. Ricker said that future developments for affordable housing needs to be net zero. She said there is a need to reduce energy costs for residents and also reduce costs of electrifying buildings. She noted one of the buildings she worked on was expensive to operate and thus there is a tension in development between energy independence and finding products that deliver heat at an affordable cost. She also managed the Green Communities grant and held other positions in Lowell. Ms. Ricker discussed the MBTA Communities program. The program isn't necessarily about the development of affordable housing, but rather it aims for development of any housing, given the great need for additional housing. She stated there will be a need to undertake a campaign in Arlington to educate the community on MBTA Communities. DPCD has been working with Mass Housing on a test pilot on how to use Mass Housing's new planning tools. The Town of Arlington is

planning to implement multifamily zoning required under MBTA Communities as an overlay district, rather than trying to change the town's underlying zoning. DPCD is planning the first public outreach meeting in the middle of November and is aiming for a special town meeting, hopefully in the fall, for adoption of the zoning overlay. The CEFC will have an opportunity to comment on the overlay district prior to then. Mr. Breslow asked what an overlay is. Ms. Ricker described that the Town has underlying zoning, such as R1, R2, etc. If the Town adopts an overlay, it allows a developer or property owner to add density (for example) greater than what they originally could build, as long as the developer/property owner agrees to conditions the Town will place on the owner/developer. Mr. Breslow asked about the methods to meet the MBTA Communities requirement. Ms. Ricker said the final guidelines require a district of reasonable size with a density of no fewer than 15 units per acre, but it doesn't have to be within a set distance from a transit facility. The Town is now looking at areas where this may work. Ms. Dein asked about the timeframe for making decisions. Ms. Ricker said there will first be a year-long community outreach campaign on MBTA Communities. To participate in the fossil fuel ban pilot, we have to have the zone in place by February 2024.

3. Town Meeting Preparation:

Ms. Fox said the specialized stretch code is the first warrant article the CEFC will work on for Town Meeting in the spring. Mr. Hanlon added that DOER published the final specialized stretch code in September. MCAN will be organizing a hearing on the new code and the focus now is to adopt the specialized stretch code. The original schedule for DOER to officially adopt the codes was December 24, 2022. The timing of finalization may change.

Mr. Hanlon said there was an important change in the document released in September by DOER. In previous versions a municipality would have to wait 6 months after final release of the code before adopting. Now DOER only recommends this but doesn't require it, so cities and towns will have discretion regarding when to adopt the specialized stretch code. It will take time to educate people on the new code. DOER will hold a webinar on November 2nd to explain the new stretch code and specialized stretch code.

For commercial buildings and low-rise buildings, there is language about solar but there is little difference between the stretch code and specialized stretch code. The main differences are for houses with conditioned area of <4,000 ft². For a larger house there are two options – all electric or net zero. For multi-family houses (over 12,000 ft²) passive house must be used. That will lead to an 80 percent reduction in heating related energy consumption. Lighting and other loads will be reduced by 40 percent. Electrification is allowed but not required. Low rise residential and multifamily comprise most of the construction in Arlington. At town meeting there will be a warrant article asking the town to adopt the specialized stretch code. If adopted, the Town will be linking to a state program much in the same way the Town did with the stretch code.

Ms. Dein asked when the residential versus the commercial requirements go into effect for the updated stretch code. Mr. Hanlon and Ms. Fox replied that all non-residential commercial buildings applying for a permit beginning on July 1st must

comply. The multi-family requirements also go into effect July 1st. Ms. Fox added there is a separate working group strategizing on outreach on the code. If any CEFC members would like to join that workgroup, please let Ms. Fox know. The CEFC will need to undertake an outreach campaign.

4. Net Zero Municipal Buildings

Ms. Fox said she is working on making the case on why a municipal bylaw is important given the changes to the state's code. The stretch code doesn't require electrification for municipal buildings and that is the main reason. There will be a component of education around the municipal warrant article. The CEFC will sponsor the bylaw. This plus the specialized stretch code will be the two warrant articles the CEFC works on for the spring town meeting.

5. Electrify Arlington

In October there was an Arlington Community Education class on electrification. There were about 25 participants that came to hear from residents who have electrified their homes. There will be another class specifically on heat pumps. Ms. Fox asked for CEFC members to volunteer. The Electrify Arlington kick off will be Wednesday November 2nd to introduce the program and talk about the importance of electrification, introduce partners (Abode, Heat Smart Alliance, coaches, All In Energy). At the event people will be able to indicate interest in signing up for coaching. They will also hear about incentives for electrification. Ms. Fox encouraged members of the CEFC to attend.

The Town received \$10,000 in Mass Save funding for outreach and education on energy efficiency for renters/landlords, and moderate and low income households. There will be events with the Council on Aging, Food Link, and other local partners to discuss the effort.

6. Permit Application for 1021 Mass Ave

This is a Chapter 40B permit application before the ZBA. Ms. Fox said the Planning Department asked if the CEFC would like to submit comments to ZBA on how the project could align with the CEFC goals. The CEFC group looked at the project summary. Ms. Dein asked if the CEFC had been asked to submit comments before on a 40B project. Mr. Hanlon said that the ZBA is reaching out more broadly to Town committees to ask for information on how the application could align with committee goals. This is not the first 40B application has been submitted over the past 3 years, but bringing this to the CEFC for comment is part of a new approach of the ZBA to garner input from town committees. The Mugar project is all-electric but the Mirak project is not, for example, so inviting committees to give input early on could encourage developers to incorporate more sustainable design features.

Ms. Fox said the application doesn't mention anything about solar or a number of other net zero design features.

Ms. Dein and Mr. Katofsky asked where the developer is in the design process. Mr. Morgan said the project proposes to use natural gas for building systems. Mr.

Amstutz said there is a sustainability checklist that the developer goes through as part of the 40B process. Mr. Hanlon said that what the Board has received is what is in the application that the CEFC was looking at.

Ms. Dein asked if it is appropriate at this stage to be commenting on the building systems. Mr. Hanlon said 40B is one-stop shopping in that the developer gets one permit. There will be conditions put on the permit approval and, for example, passive house might ultimately go into a condition. There could be other sustainable design considerations that could be permit conditions. Mr. Amstutz said now is the time to raise these design issues to get the developer to start thinking about getting sustainable design considered and incorporated. He added anything related to energy efficiency and GHG reductions are all fair game to be considered at this point in the process. Ms. Dein asked if anything had been included about electric vehicle charging stations and that should be an ask from the CEFC. Ms. Dein said the two references to conforming with the specialized stretch code and stretch code in the draft language that Ms. Fox showed on the screen should be reworded. Mr. Morgan agreed and said that it is unfair to ask a 40B to do more than is required of other developers. There was a discussion about whether or not sending CEFC member comments by email is considered “deliberation.” Mr. Morgan said there was a conservation commission ruling that comments would qualify as deliberation.

Mr. Katofsky said the application refers to compliance with the master plan. The CEFC could tie this back to CEFC priorities. Mr. Miettinen asked if the CEFC was going to vote on providing comments. David Morgan said his committees are not voting on submitting comments, they are merely submitting. Mr. DiTullio said this is the first time the CEFC is considering submitting comments and he is not opposed to doing so but would like it to have more of a set process. Given the CEFC doesn't have a set process, the committee should submit general comments rather than specific requests. Mr. Katofsky suggested we note that the town is moving in a clear direction in terms of the built environment and note a lack of detail in the 40b application about how the developer's approach may align with the policy direction that the CEFC is taking. Ms. Dein thought the CEFC could ask about the building envelope efficiency, electric vehicle charging, and rooftop solar. Ms. Fox asked is anyone is uncomfortable with the language in the text. No committee members expressed discomfort with the updated draft text. Ms. Dein said the CEFC could also ask if there are plans to accommodate for expansion of EV charging on the site as EV demand grows.

Hybrid Meeting Pilot

Ms. Fox requested that committee members consider whether they want to attend in person and suggested that, due to time constraints in the meeting, the CEFC should revisit this at the next meeting on November 18.

Vote on Gas Leaks Pilot

The CEFC will vote on this at the next meeting on November 18.

Next CEFC Meetings

The November meeting falls on Thanksgiving so we will meet on the third Friday of the month. In December the CEFC will also meet on the third Friday of the month to accommodate the holiday season.

Additional items – Mr. Katofsky said the new high school building will likely be LEED platinum.

Mr. Katofsky moved to end the meeting and Ms. Dein seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17.

Submitted by Coralie Cooper.